

Walking and Leaping and Praising God; Acts 3:6-8

I. Asking

A. We don't always get what we expect

1. Toys from the back of comic books (or in fast food kids' meals)
2. Phone cases (I bought one online about six months ago)

B. We do get everything we need

1. Sometimes we confuse "need" with "want"
2. Psalm 37:25 (ESV); I have been young, and now am old, yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken or his children begging for bread.

C. But this is not about "needs" versus "wants"

D. This is about expectations versus reality

II. Expectations

A. Acts 3:1–3 (ESV); ¹ Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour. ² And a man lame from birth was being carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple that is called the Beautiful Gate to ask alms of those entering the temple. ³ Seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked to receive alms.

B. This is a man who had been lame since birth, about 40 years (Acts 4:22)

C. All he had ever known was begging for alms

D. Deuteronomy 15:7–11 (ESV); ⁷ "If among you, one of your brothers should become poor, in any of your towns within your land that the Lord your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart or shut your hand against your poor brother, ⁸ but you shall open your hand to him and lend him sufficient for his need, whatever it may be. ⁹ Take care lest there be an unworthy thought in your heart and you say, 'The seventh year, the year of release is near,' and your eye look grudgingly on your poor brother, and you give him nothing, and he cry to the Lord against you, and you be guilty of sin. ¹⁰ You shall give to him freely, and your heart shall not be grudging when you give to him, because for this the Lord your God will bless you in all your work and in all that you undertake. ¹¹ For there will never cease to be poor in the land. Therefore I command you, 'You shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor, in your land.'

E. God commanded His people to take care of each other

1. Deuteronomy 24:19 (ESV); "When you reap your harvest in your field and forget a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it. It shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands.
2. Leviticus 19:10 (ESV); And you shall not strip your vineyard bare, neither shall you gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard. You shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner: I am the Lord your God.
3. Leviticus 23:22 (ESV); "And when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field right up to its edge, nor shall you gather the gleanings after your harvest. You shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner: I am the Lord your God."
4. David, writing in his Psalm 37, becomes more clear now, doesn't it?
5. We are responsible for providing for our families
6. 1 Timothy 5:8 (ESV); But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.
7. But sometimes things happen that make that pretty hard, if not impossible to do

8. the lame beggar was in such a position and dependent upon his fellow brothers for support
- F. Acts 3:3–5 (ESV); ³ Seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked to receive alms. ⁴ And Peter directed his gaze at him, as did John, and said, “Look at us.” ⁵ And he fixed his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them.
 - G. This man was expecting to receive money as he had every day for probably 30 years
 - H. What are we expecting from God?
 1. We ask for healing, money, resources, attitude adjustments (for ourselves) soft hearts ready to receive the Gospel, and many other things
 2. Yet, many times God gives us something else (maybe we don't even see it because our expectations are off)
 3. But God is giving us what we need
 4. It is obvious that the lame man needed alms to live, but that is not what God gave him
- III. Teach A Man To Fish...
- A. “if you give a man a fish he is hungry again in an hour. If you teach him to catch a fish you do him a good turn.” ¹
 - B. Jewish tradition sends us back to the 12th century to Rabbi Moses ben Maimon who described 8 levels of charitable giving
 - C. “The highest form of charity is to help sustain a person before they become impoverished by offering a substantial gift in a dignified manner, or by extending a suitable loan, or by helping them find employment or establish themselves in business so as to make it unnecessary for them to become dependent on others.” ²
 - D. Acts 3:6–7 (ESV); ⁶ But Peter said, “I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!” ⁷ And he took him by the right hand and raised him up, and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong.
 - E. He did not get what he was expecting!
 1. Expecting money, he received the ability to provide for himself
 2. Expecting money, he received healing
 - F. We should take a very hard look at what we receive from God (compared to what we asked from Him)
 1. Is God “teaching us to fish?”
 2. James 1:17 (ESV); Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.
 3. James is countering the thought that God tempts us to sin; we are tempted by our own passions and sin when we accept those temptations
 4. Only good things come from God (even though we glorify God in hard times and tragedies)
 5. No matter what we ask for, if it is good, it is from God and meant for our learning and to instruct us

¹ 1885 August, Macmillan’s Magazine, Mrs. Dymond, (Serialized version of the novel), Start Page 241, Quote Page 246, Volume 52, Macmillan and Co, London and New York.

² "Charity (Tzedakah)." Eight Levels of Charitable Giving. Jewish Virtual Library, n.d. Web. 26 Apr. 2017. <<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/eight-levels-of-charitable-giving>>.

6. What we might think is a “no” from God is actually something else meant to sustain us for a longer period of time
- G. Make no mistake, God is the one who provides for us
1. 2 Peter 1:3 (ESV); His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence,
 2. Matthew 6:31–33 (ESV); ³¹ Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ ³² For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. ³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.
 3. Seeking the Kingdom of God, seeking God’s righteousness means we have a Father who will meet everyone of our needs, both for life and for godliness
- IV. Praising God
- A. Acts 3:8 (ESV); And leaping up, he stood and began to walk, and entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God.
 - B. All too often, this is not how we respond when we don’t get what we want
 1. We sulk, we “settle for less,” we rationalize our lack of whatever it is we did not get
 2. We often fail to see what God has given us
 - C. We should be “leaping and praising God”
 - D. What are you expecting?
 - E. What have you received?
 - F. What is your response?